

From the Enduring Freedom Chapel

By Chaplain Gene Theriot

There are some things constant about service in this Combined Joint Task Force. There's the heat and there's the mission and there 's the noisy crows that fly around the Camp. There is another thing that's constant around here and that's the turn over of personnel. Every couple of weeks, the Patriot Express comes through to drop off newly reporting people and to pick up those whose tours of duty in Djibouti have come to an end. That turn over of personnel, seen all over the Camp, has been seen in the Chaplains Office too. Three of the five people assigned, reported aboard within the last four weeks. In addition to Religious Program Specialist Bryan, two new chaplains arrived. Chaplain John Hannigan, a Catholic Chaplain, is filling the U.S. Marine Forces Central Command Djibouti as the chaplain, a billet that had been vacant for several months. Chaplain Hannigan is a recalled reservist, who most recently served the men and women of the First Marine Aircraft Wing on Okinawa. In just a short while, he has become one of the most widely known persons on the Camp. He ministry of presence takes him to work centers from the flight line to the guard posts, from early in the morning until late at night.

The other new face is mine. I am the Combined Joint Task Force Chaplain, Gene Theriot. I come to the

Horn of Africa from Navy Region Hawaii, where I serve as the Regional Chaplain. Even though I love my wife and our home in Hawaii, I am, nonetheless, glad to be here serving the men and women of CJTF-HOA. In fact, I consider it an honor to be here among my fellow Americans doing an important job. I would rather be here serving your loved ones for these six months, than be any place in the world, even Hawaii.

In my first few days here, I made two observations. First, there was a very active Chapel program on Camp Lemonier. Every day and night, there are worship services, Bible studies, fellowship events, choir practices and community meetings in the Chapel of Enduring Freedom. A lot of people are involved. The second observation I made was that there was exceptionally high morale among the troops here. People had a positive attitude about being here, they approached each day with enthusiasm and believed they were making important contributions to the Global War on Terrorism. I'd like to think my first and second observations were related. I hope they are. Each of us on the Religious Ministries Team is working hard to make it so.

God bless you all who support us here and God bless America.

